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Refugee Realities

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Abstract

It is critical for students graduating from high school to understand geopolitics in order to be able to participate fully in college discussions, become knowledgeable voters and ultimately grow to be informed and productive members of a global society. Yet, how does an educator teach tolerance, acceptance and international camaraderie without teaching opinion? I approached this question by first writing a course entitled Current Middle East Conflicts. My first step was to inform students about the truth of the many conflicts happening in their world, with a particular focus on the Middle East. To further enhance instruction, I retained a grant to study in the United Arab Emirates. The results of having fully informed students witness their teacher travel to the Middle East, and communicate with them via technology the entire time she was there, were fascinating. American students became more accepting of the reality that there are peaceful, and in fact luxuriant, parts of the Middle East that are safe and, in reality, enticing to travel to. To conclude, the blog and lesson plans that I created while traveling through the Middle East, as well as the curriculum that I wrote for the class on Current Middle East Conflicts, can be used by any teacher or professor to fully inform students about geopolitics, culture and to demystify the Middle East. In conclusion, preventing religious bias, without teaching opinion, occurs when a teacher presents students with the truth of their world. Thus, the teacher is not teaching belief, he or she is informing students about the facts. Knowledge is the power that combats religious bias. In an effort to spread the word to other professionals worldwide, I have presented at educator workshops in the United States; I have also presented at an international conference in Istanbul this June. I am now seeking out this opportunity to share the book, Refugee Realities, that I have written at the International Conference on New Findings in Humanities and Social Sciences.

Keywords: Refugees, Middle East, Tolerance